

Fault lines in the health and medical insurance industry



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In this article, we continue to focus on challenges in health and medical insurance in Namibia.

Medical insurers' tariffs for health related services and products are capped based on the type of membership and the monthly contribution of members. The more pricy the contribution, the higher the maximum amount of benefits that can be claimed.

Some medical insurers' tariffs are unrealistic for the services provided in terms of cost and quality by service providers such as dentists and medical doctors. Equipment used by such service providers and hospitals is extremely expensive. For this reason, a substantial number of these service providers cannot deliver quality services if they are contracted-in.

Some of these contracted-in service providers do not have much of a choice but to provide services that match the capped amounts for specific services that can be claimed from medical insurers. Such balancing acts tend to be "quick fixes" to accommodate customers with emergencies and in dire need of assistance.

RETURN VISITS

However, such temporary solutions are not in the interest of customers

because they do not receive quality services. They have to execute return visits to the same or another service provider to enable a longer-term solution for these "quick fixes". Such repeating visits take customers out of their productive work. They have to wait in overcrowded waiting rooms for scheduled appointments that are not always on time. The situation is also not in the interest of the medical insurer, because they have to pay for several visits to deal with the side effects of "quick fix" solutions. The waste of money in the medical and/or health industry are neither in the interest of the health and/or medical insurers and service providers, nor the customers. The bottom line is: customers' health, quality of life and money are at stake. Is it not possible that medical insurers, service providers and members (customers), try to find longer-term solutions for these challenges?

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